

TAKING HOME-STAY TO THE NEXT LEVEL: A CONSORTIUM FOR RESIDENCY TOURISM

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Abstract: In spite of being a relatively newer concept, Home-Stay Tourism is rapidly gaining popularity and is grabbing the attention and interest of both researchers and facilitators. Although the term is seemingly indicative of letting travelers/tourists stay at one's home and thereby, playing host to them as we play host to any other guests visiting us without any or much structural rearrangement made to the existing home set-up; however, with the increasing advent and role-play of intermediaries in bringing together tourists and hosts, it is often found that house-owners are required to engage in much 're-dos' and 'restructurings' as per the expectations and specifications of the intermediaries if only to guarantee a place for themselves in the industry. This, not only, puts an added pressure on the so-called "amateur" locals to incur higher start-up and maintenance costs but also imposes upon them an obligation to share their earnings with the bigger players of the hospitality sector. Many a times, the house-owners are required to enter into contracts and agreements with these bigger names which make it binding upon them to perform even at the cost of compromising their own priorities, preferences and comfort zones. On the other hand, so far as the average/ middle class Indian tourist is concerned, their passion to trot around the globe is often dampened by the prospect of a huge hole in their wallets courtesy such foreign travel.

What is, therefore, perceived necessary by the researchers is the possibility of working out a model that connects the prospective traveler/tourist and the house-owner/accommodation-provider directly; one which respects and assures the priorities, preferences and comforts of both parties; one which ensures economic and financial benefits to both; and one which guarantees safety and security of life and property of both; along with ensuring a genuine taste of local culture and tradition of the destination-of-visit.

Most of the prior research on Home-Stay Tourism are found to be focused on issues like the satisfaction level of tourists, Service Quality, impacts on tourism development, commercialisations, or on the opportunities and challenges of such tourism, etc..

This study is, therefore, an effort to address the following primary objectives:

- To understand the organisation and functioning of Home-Stay arrangements within and outside India.
- To examine the complexities of the existing home-stay arrangements from the point of view of the facilitators as well as the tourists.
- To analyze the role of intermediaries in creating a connect between the facilitators and the tourists.

So as to achieve the objectives of the study, the researchers have adopted an entirely Review-Based Method of collecting the necessary data to lay down a solid theoretical and analytical base to arrive at the findings. The choice of the stated method stands justified by the backdrop of non-availability of much previous research works with regard to the problem and purpose of the present study.

Keywords- Home-Stay, Consortium, Tourists, Facilitators.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a Meta-Industry comprising of various facilitating members and service providers who tend to enjoy an independent status of their own as well that is devoid of/distinct from the tourism sector. Let us consider the cases of the transportation and the accommodation sectors for example. As do they contribute towards the tourism industry, so also do they perform as an active member of their respective industries. The same is the stand of the players in the art and cultural front, the retail front, or any other. However, what remains a fact is that, inspite of their distinctive status and operations, tourism brings together these varied sectors and creates additional earning opportunities for all of them. This very belief has motivated many more to participate in and contribute towards tourism activities and the tourism industry at large. This apart, tourism is an industry that makes private gains out of utilizing public resources. This statement stands justified when we look at the usage of water bodies for generating private income by way of facilitating various water sports and recreational activities for tourists.

II. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

An impressive number of the educated, medium-income-earning Indian desires to travel abroad either for work, education or leisure – the figure is only rapidly increasing. However, the biggest hurdle in fulfilling this desire is the hard blow evidenced on their purchasing power. Particularly, the more developed the country of their dream visit is, the bigger tends to be the hole dug into their pockets. In the process of ensuring a secured and professionally planned trip, they tend to rely on established tourism players at stated rates; many a times, even though not quite satisfied with the price to be paid or with the itinerary offered. They would have rather been happier had they been able to independently choose where to stay, what to see, what to eat and when to move - provided all these were to come with a guarantee of easily accessible facilitators and security assurance at negotiable prices. So far as the facilitators are concerned, they too would have been happier and more enthusiastic to participate had they the liberty to choose and decide on whom to accommodate, what to offer, when to accommodate (or not to accommodate), what price to charge, etc. with some assurance of safety to their life and property from uncertified and unwanted visitors.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A consideration of the aforestated two standpoints – i.e. of the desiring budget travellers and the aspiring resident stay providers – brings the researchers to question the existing set-up of home-stay arrangements across the globe, in general, and that of India, in particular. Through the conduct of this study, the researchers intend to make some notable contribution towards bringing the desiring budget tourists in direct contact with the aspiring locals offering home-stay arrangements in a way that the former gets what they desire (in terms of stay and travel arrangements) at a cheaper rate and the latter is able to enjoy the entire share of their earnings out of facilitating such stay ; the win-win effect resulting out of the abolition of middlemen in building up the connect between the two parties.

IV. UNDERSTANDING CONCEPTS

Often, the terms Bed and Breakfast (B & B) and Paying Guest (PG) are seen to replace Home-Stays; however, not necessarily meaning one and the same thing. Both B & B and PG accommodation may or may not be indicative of a home to stay in. On the other hand, a Home-Stay tourism refers to a form of tourism where the tourists get to stay with a family in the destination of visit and get to spend time and move around with the members of the family – such that social and cultural interaction (in a way quite distinct from the professionalism of a businessmen) takes place while exploring various tourist spots.

Many a times, longer home-stays are found to be popular amongst students and/or employees temporarily residing in a particular destination as part of an educational exchange programme or a work project.

Ruth Kemunto Kimaiga, in his thesis, has beautifully developed the following few operational definitions related to the concept under discussion, for the purpose of his research:

- **Homestay:** It is the act of staying in someone's home as a guest at a fee. It can also be termed as dwelling together with a family unit that occupies a home.
- **Host family:** The family who live on the premises or home sharing their space with guests who pay directly or indirectly to stay in their homes.
- **Homestay operator:** One in charge of running the homestay business or program.
- **Motivation:** A need or desire that energizes behaviour and directs it towards a goal.
- **Rural communities:** People living in the rural areas.
- **Socio-economic wellbeing:** In this context relates to improvement in the way people interact in groups and society and improvement in their standard of living.
- **Positioning:** The way by which the marketers attempt to create a distinct impression in the customer's mind.
- **Social equity:** Fair distribution of tourism benefits to the local people.
- **Knowledge:** Facts and information acquired through experience or education. It may also refer to practical understanding of a subject.

Timlasana (2012) stated that "A Home-Stay, by its combined words (home stay) is staying in some one's home as a paying guest for short time period. But such guests are provided accommodation and services by individual family and community too. Therefore, the Home- Stay Regulation has accepted it as run (managed) by an individual or community."

Thus, inspite of its striking similarity with B & B and PG, Home-Stays are more closer to the concept of VFR tourism (abbreviated for Visit to Friends and Relatives) but against a certain payment towards the host family unlike in case of VFR. Here too, guests are either accommodated in the family home, or in separate quarters nearby. And to do away with the awkwardness of stranger associations and rather to ensure some degree of professionalism for the payment charged, most homestays provide their guests with just as much comfort as a reputable hotel.

The ancient Indian wisdom of "*Athithi Devo Bhava*", meaning - "The Guest is God"- makes the country an appropriate destination for developing and refining the Home-Stay set-up. The sorry fact is that most visitors who come to India and stay in hotels never get to experience true Indian hospitality. The growing popularity of homestays in India can ensure not only a pleasant and cheaper stay for tourists but also can guarantee decent income generation for the locals and the local economy. For this to be practically feasible and worthy of bearing the fruits it is worth, in-depth researches and resultant contributions aimed at benefitting both the tourists and the home-stay providers are necessary.

V. RESEARCH GAP

To legitimate new research, it is important for the researcher to analyse the existing literature in the similar bodies of research. As such, the researchers have put a humble effort to review a number of relevant literature so as to identify the research gap. Most of the prior researches on Homestay Tourism were found to be focused on issues like the following:

- tourist perceived value and satisfaction towards homestay tourism programme
- impact of homestay programme on the local community and overall development of the area.
- commercialization of rural home and historical houses.
- socio economic wellbeing as a result of homestay tourism programme.

However, the researchers did not come across any research focussing on a convenient consortium that directly connects the prospective tourist and the house-owners, one which can satisfy the interest of both the parties involved. Thereby, this study is an effort contribute significantly in this respect.

VI. OBJECTIVES

- To understand the organisation and functioning of Home-Stay arrangements within and outside India.
- To examine the complexities of the existing home-stay arrangements from the point of view of the facilitators as well as the tourists.

VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper in hand primarily follows a Review-Based Methodology. The analysis and interpretation of the pre-set objectives have been done based on a description and critical analysis of the previous research findings in the same regard. To serve the purpose, the literature reviewed have been categorically dealt with in respect of each distinct objective. The findings derived, therefrom, have been used to develop a tentative model for creating a direct connect between the prospective tourists and the prospective home-stay facilitators so as to ensure a win-win situation for both stakeholders/beneficiaries (taking cue from the concept and practice of Multi Level Marketing in case of physical goods).

VIII. THE DISCUSSION

Objective 1: To understand the organisation and functioning of Home-Stay arrangements within and outside India.

- **Within India**
 - **R.Venkatesh and H.V.Mukesh(2015)** in their study entitled, “The Role of Home stays in Promoting Rural Tourism” focuses on the potentialities that homestay tourism offers towards the promotion and development of rural tourism. The findings suggested homestay tourism as a sustainable revenue generating opportunity contributing immensely towards rural development, thereby promoting rural tourism and the society at large.
 - **Anand A et.al(2012)**, in their paper, “Homestays at Korzok: Supplementing Rural Livelihoods and Supporting Green Tourism in the Indian Himalayas” designs a homestay model in Korzok village of Leh District, Ladakh taking aid from the project launched by WWF-India with the prime objective of developing a strategy for high altitude wetlands conservation in the Himalayas. It could be concluded that the project has the possibility of establishing green tourism and promoting rural livelihood inspite of the existing rural constraints. This model promoted entrepreneurship among the people of this region and has also attracted the inhabitants of Tso kar village, a similar high altitude wetland area.
 - **Chhetri, M.K(2015)**, “A study on Dallagaon Homestay and its Sustainability” is a survey based study carried out on 70 respondents from different areas namely homestay households, non-homestay households, guests and the homestay management committee with the prime objective to analyze the sustainability of homestay tourism and its impact on local community. It seemed that the program has encouraged employment generation among the locals, mostly of which are women. Initially, additional income was the key factor for these households as they were also engaged primarily in agriculture. With time, the program has undergone upgradations and at present has 53 beds which can accommodate 19 thousand guests per year. The households are been able to attract guests through its livelihood, cultures, traditions alongwith the rare-one horned rhino. Over the

time, the homestay communities have also developed their skills through cross-sectional exchanges with the tourists.

- **Outside India**

- **Amin A and Ibrahim Y (2015)** in their research entitled “Model of Sustainable Community Participation in Homestay Program” developed a fit model between community participation and sustainable development among the Malaysian homestay participants. A total of 306 respondents were selected from 3,264 participants through stratified random sampling and were analysed using structural equation model. It was found from the model that there exists a positive relationship between community participants and sustainable development, thereby suggesting a more appropriate training module programme for the participant that adds to their competence and responsibility in organising the homestay program in near future.
- **Bhuiyan Anowar Hossain and Ismail S.M.**, in their study “Home Stay Accommodation for Tourism Development in East Coast Economic Region” examines the potentialities of homestay tourism development in ECER by taking into account 10 homestay owners from the state of Terengganu as sample respondents. The findings of the study indicated homestay tourism as an economic activity as ECER is a backward region as compared to other parts of Malaysia. Emergence of homestay accommodation will thereby support the local people financially and enhance the region socially and culturally.
- **Suebsuk N and Nakagawa O (2014)** in his study titled “Sustainable Infrastructure and Conservation Ideas on Homestay Modification; Owners’ Motivation and Tourists’ Satisfaction in Amphawa, Thailand” emphasized mainly towards the modification of historical houses into homestay accommodation. It was suggested that for future tourism development in a sustainable manner, cultural conservation of traditional building design alongwith conservation of cultural activities, traditions and local way of life played a significant role. The study concludes that this form of homestay accommodation provides satisfaction to the tourists and with good management in urban regeneration, there is immense potential to attract tourists all across the globe.
- **Binnui, A. (2016)** “Towards Sustainable Community- Based Tourism: A Case of Homestay in Suratthani Province, Thailand” examines and explores the potential of current homestay tourism with emphasis on capacity building for a sustainable community based tourism. The research was undertaken in 2 phases: first is the qualitative approach via oral interview and second is the quantitative approach put forward among the relevant players in the industry. The results of the study showed that the local community offers various tourists products and have established their own managed homestays. However, there is also the need for continuous improvement in their business, at the same time there should be active participation from the external organisation as observed from the findings of the study.

So as to build up a clearer idea as to the organisation and functioning of Homestay arrangements, the following cases have been discussed:

Case 1: The Asosiasi Usaha Homestay Lokal Kabupaten Raja Ampat that translates as “Raja Ampat Local Homestay Business Enterprise Association” but is more commonly known as The Raja Ampat Homestay Association (HSA) was formed by the owners of Papuan Homestay businesses and has a threefold aim as follows:

- To foster the establishment of a strong, locally-owned ecotourism economy which will empower island communities with the political influence necessary to realise their desire for environmental and cultural preservation.
- To assist each other in the development of the skills required to successfully operate sustainable ecotourism ventures.
- To assist travellers to Raja Ampat by setting minimum standards for homestay facilities, ensuring member compliance with those standards and providing a channel for guest feedback and complaint resolution.

The Raja Ampat Local Homestay Association currently represents **just over sixty family-owned businesses**. These are not private individual businesses, but family entities, similar to a traditional joint stock company, that support and employ an extended network of relations.

The Association is now the **largest community-owned business grouping** in the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua. First concentrated around the islands of Mansuar and Gam in the Dampier Strait, the Association's membership is spreading to include communities from other parts of Raja Ampat such as the Fam islands, western Waigeo and the island of Batanta.

The Association's members understand that their businesses depend on the integrity of their environment. They believe that they and others in their communities are best positioned to protect that environment, and that their businesses give them the means to do so.

The Association mobilises **technical assistance and funding** for business skills training and mentoring for its members. The Association also provides certain **business services** to its members such as online promotion and bookings, and it manages government relations on issues such as the management of MPA entrance fees.

The Association is **setting standards** on diving, transport and hospitality to govern the conduct of its members' businesses. It is currently working to adapt and apply the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC) to the homestay sector.

The Association is also a **social movement** motivated by the desire to **prevent family land being sold to resorts** and to stand on their own feet as economic actors. The pain that people feel when they have lost land remains the single most important factor in motivating people to set up the Homestay Association.

The Association is a **community organization** that, for the first time, gives people from multiple communities their own, shared space to discuss their lives and businesses; and also to find solutions to the problems that most concern them, such as waste management, illegal fishing, illegal logging, and the loss of culture and identity.

As such, the Association **fills an institutional vacuum**. With the possible exception of the church there is, at present, no other structure at community level that regularly convenes people from different villages in order to talk about matters that are too big for each village to address on its own.

The Association is **inspiring youth**. Over half its management team are in their twenties and thirties and represent a new generation of community leaders that could serve Raja Ampat for the next forty years. The opportunity to work for the family business means that youth now want to come home after completing their studies. Much of the money that their families' homestays generate now pays for their younger sisters and brothers to also go to college.

The Association is **empowering women**. The Association understands that it will fail if men and women cannot work together. The Association's most energetic managers are now women. They are the glue that binds the Association's membership, and are organising other women in their villages to set up kiosks and a market for local organic produce to keep homestays supplied. Their example has transformed the outlook of women in the community.

The homestay sector is therefore serving, not only to protect the marine environment, but also to **regenerate community**. Where this serves to build a **supporting system of extended family and other social relations** then it reinforces the likelihood that conservation will succeed.

The Homestay Association's success in advancing local nature-based solutions for sustainable development was recognised by the United Nations Development Programme 2017 award of an Equator Prize.

Case 2 : The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has come forward with a Homestay Scheme in the State of Kerala intended at passing on the benefits of the growing tourism industry in the state to more locals and residents. The Scheme identifies and classifies probable homestays based on the facilities and quality of the accommodation provided. Homestay units are classified into three categories by bringing out clear guidelines on the requirements: these categories being Diamond Houses, Gold Houses and Silver Houses. Homestay units fulfilling all the essential conditions prescribed by the Department of Tourism and meeting the required criteria in the Checklist of Facilities, belonging to the Class A category are given the Diamond House status, Class B category are awarded the Gold House status and Class C category are accorded the Silver House status.

The prime eligibility criteria for participating in the scheme consists of the below mentioned:

- Individuals or families who own a house of good quality in the State and can spare at least 1 room and upto maximum 6 rooms for tourist accommodation.
- The classification will be given only in those cases where the owner/promoter of the unit alongwith his/her family is physically residing in the same unit.
- At least one of the family members should be able to communicate in English.
- The houses in areas of tourism importance will get priorit

In case of dissatisfaction regarding the categorization or classification, the unit may appeal to the Secretary (Tourism), Government of Kerala, within 30 days of receiving the communication regarding the same.

The Scheme also makes for:

- The presence of facilities and services to be evaluated against the checklist and score sheet by the concerned Committee responsible for the task. The checklist should be duly filled in and signed on all pages and submitted to the Department of Tourism with the application.
- The classified units are expected to maintain the required standards at all times. The Classification Committee is to inspect the same at any time without previous notice and any serious deficiencies are to be reported to the Department of Tourism, which has the liberty to take any action including cancellation of the classification.
- All classified units are to submit specific forms and documents (including Passport details) to the police station as done by the hotels while accommodating foreign nationals.

This Scheme passes on the following benefits to the residents of the State:

- Earning additional income other than his/her regular income alongwith ensuring sustained employment.
- Use of and capitalizing upon the Kerala Tourism Brand for marketing their products and services.
- Support of the Government in Capacity Building.
- Facilitation by the Government in getting loans from financial institutions for the improvement of the existing houses for conversion into Homestays.
- Post implementation assistance and monitoring from the Government to ensure proper functioning of the Homestay units by providing professional guidance and managerial directions to the entrepreneurial units in respect of marketing, technical knowhow and support and capacity building.

Objective 2: To examine the complexities of the existing home-stay arrangements from the point of view of the facilitators as well as the tourists.

✓ **Facilitators' Viewpoint**

- **Pusiran A.K. and Xiao Honggen (2013)**, "Challenges and Community Development: A Case Study of Homestay in Malaysia" is a review based paper on community development and

challenges faced by the key players of the homestay programme in Malaysia. The study employed content analysis by reviewing previous literature. It is found that the participants are benefited by means of additional income earned and the number of participants also rose every year. However, the homestay programme here, faces more of internal and external challenges like incompetent community participants, lack experience and knowledge, lack creativity and skills, reluctant to take risks, exploitation by outside parties, lack efficient networking which has hampered the industry's growth. As such, it is with timely support and positive implications by the key players that will improve the current homestay programme in Malaysia.

- **Wong Oi Yee (2014)** in his research titled "Towards Sustainable Community Development: A Case Study of Homestay Tourism in Sabah" examines the impact of homestay tourism development on the native communities of four villages in rural Sabah using Sustainable Livelihood Method and Multi-Ethnographic Method to achieve the objectives of the same. It was observed from the case study that, although homestay communities are free to manage the activities and offered products of homestay, the actual process of decision making depends heavily on political networks. As a result, the poorer segments are excluded/left behind from participating in the homestay programme. It could be concluded that though homestay tourism is perceived as a development tool, yet it remains vulnerable due to political interference.
- **Sita Donny S.E. and Nor Mohd N.A. (2015)** in their paper titled "Local Perceptions towards Tourism Impacts Related to Homestay Programme" analyses the social impacts of tourism on the perceptions of local residents based on degrees of contact i.e. High Contact (HC), Medium Contact (MC) and Low Contact (LC) between them and thereby examines whether the local residents encourages or restricts additional tourism development in Kampung Benuk Homestay, Kuching. 12 respondents were interviewed in the process and the data collected were tested through two theoretical frameworks, namely Social Exchange Theory and Model of Resident Tourism Perceptions and Attitudes. In terms of social impacts, it was found that HC and LC respondents had positive view in compared to the MC respondents who perceived more costs involvement in tourism than the benefits received. Compared with the HC and MC respondents, the LC respondents supported as well restricted additional tourism development. The findings thereby indicated that not every individual in the community has the same perception towards tourism and its impact.
- **Bhan Suraj and Singh Lakhvinder (2014)** in their study entitled, "Homestay Tourism in India: Opportunities and Challenges" emphasizes the opportunities available and challenges faced in homestay tourism sector in India. Where the offerings and products of the Indian tourism market is huge and limitless, it seemed most of it have yet to be explored. Rural Homestay Tourism should be incorporated as one of the tourism policies which will create employment and increase standard of living in rural areas. It was also found that temporary challenges faced by the tourism sector could be resolved with appropriate strategies and planning.
- **Kontogeorgopoulos N., Churyen A and Duangsaeng V,** explores in his paper entitled "Homestay Tourism and the Commercialization of the Rural Home in Thailand" the implications of commercializing rural home as an alternative means of accommodation by taking into account a case study of 30 natives of Mae Kampong village. It was found that Mae Kampong Village in Thailand adopting CBT landscape emerged as an excellent case study on successful homestay tourism. Homestay tourism will allow the rural community with limited economic options to utilize their home as a source of extra income.
- **Shukor Md Shafin, Salleh N, Othman R, and Idris S.(2014),** in his -research entitled "Perception of Homestay Operators towards Homestay Development in Malaysia" aims to analyse the perception of homestay operators towards development of homestay tourism and thereby its impact on economy, society, culture and environment. Structural Equation Model (SEM) and Exploratory Factor Analysis test were employed on 333 homestay operators and it

was found that the operators may gain various benefits in the form of economic, social, cultural as well as environmental conservation while participating in homestay development operations.

- Nepal has emerged as an attractive domain for homestay tourism over the years. With an aim to study the homestay programme, **Lama, M. (2013)** in his paper titled “*Community homestay programmes as a form of sustainable tourism development in Nepal*” analyses and explores its implementation, dimension and challenges of homestay operations in Nepal. The findings concluded that the homestay programme plays a significant role in sustainable development and contributes towards economic and social sustainability by treasuring its culture and tradition. The study also provides suggestion towards capacity development, basic infrastructure and well-framed government mechanism
- **Noh, I.N.B.M. (2015)** in his research entitled “*Women Empowerment in organizing homestay program. Case Study: Homestay Sinaran Baru, Senai, Johor*” identifies and analyses the features, involvement and motivational factors of women entrepreneurs in organizing homestay programmes. It was found that most of the women homestay organizers were housewives basically in their 40s to 60s of age with minimum education. Because of less qualification, age and such alike barriers self-employment in the form of homestay entrepreneur has emerged. Another significant observation of the study indicated a extra steady income source of the operators as it was an add on to their main occupational source of income. Moreover, it was also observed that involvement of the women entrepreneurs are more likely to grow in near future with more women engaging themselves into homestay programme.
- **Shukor Md Shafin, Salleh N, Othman R, and Idris S. (2014)**, in his research entitled “*Perception of Homestay Operators towards Homestay Development in Malaysia*” aims to analyse the perception of homestay operators towards development of homestay tourism and thereby its impact on economy, society, culture and environment. Structural Equation Model (SEM) and Exploratory Factor Analysis test were employed on 333 homestay operators and it was found that the operators may gain various benefits in the form of economic, social, cultural as well as environmental conservation while participating in homestay development operations.
- **Kimaiga, R.K. (2011)**, in his research titled “*Homestay Tourist Accommodation as a Tool for Socio-Economic Wellbeing of Rural Communities in Kenya: A Case of Taita Taveta County (thesis)*” sought to put forward the homestay concept, identify motivational factors of the operators, its socio-economic benefits to the host families and also the factors influencing tourist choice of homestay. Based on the primary and secondary data collected, the study revealed that income being the major motivational factor influencing participation of the homestay operators. Homestay tourist accommodation was found to be a significant means of boosting the socio-economic wellbeing of rural people but to benefit fully the local people need to be trained with the basic knowledge and skills. The study also recommends that the destination marketer and the homestay operators should take into consideration the factors influencing tourist choice of homestay in Kenya.
- **Macek, I.C. (2012)**, created an evaluation matrix to determine the suitability of developing a homestay program in his thesis titled “*Homestays as Livelihood Strategies in Rural Economies: The case of Johar Valley, Uttarakhand, India*”. The evaluation matrix developed for this thesis indicated that a phased, multi-village homestay model would be suitable for the study area. The scores from the developed tool recommended that the program be initiated in Milam and Burphu, and incrementally work its way towards Munsiyari. The case studies from Ladakh and Sarmoli demonstrated that the village leaders with a strong vision and collaborative partnerships can create a successful homestay model. The study also recommended that the villages would benefit from first-aid training and workshops on developing educational demonstrations in the Johar Valley of Uttarakhand.

- The research conducted by **Karlsson, R. (2009)**, in his thesis titled “*Homework before homestay- The importance of host-training for sustainable tourism development*” (thesis) aims to explore the impacts of homestay and the importance of host-training on sustainable tourism development. The study identified that the respective hosts do not possess the required skills and knowledge for the homestay concept. It was observed that the hosts lack confidence when it comes to hosting and this causes lack of opportunity for guests to experience the host culture and daily lifestyle. The findings concluded the need of financial assistance by the Government alongwith the required host-training for an effective sustainable tourism development.
- **Acharya B.P. (2013)**, in his thesis titled “*Homestays as an Alternative Tourism Product for Sustainable Community Development: A Case Study of Women-Managed Tourism Product in Rural Nepal*” discusses a case study of Barpak, proposing homestays as a pro-women tourism opportunity that promotes sustainable community development by fostering gender equality in rural Nepal. Endowed with naturally beautiful rural hills and mountains, its indigenous communities with their mystical lifestyle and culture, the study suggests homestays are congruent with Nepal’s destination image. Moreover, this paper also highlights that women-managed homestays are a means of income generating avenues with overall development of the women community in the study area

✓ *Tourists’ Viewpoint*

- **Ismail M., Hanafiah, M., Aminuddin, N., and Mustafa, N. (2016)**, in their paper “*Community-Based Homestay Service Quality, Visitor Satisfaction, and Behavioral Intention*” investigate the relationship between the current homestay service quality, visitor satisfaction and future behavioral intention. The results provided evidence of positive and significant relationship among the service quality, visitor satisfaction and behavioral intention. Furthermore, they found that visitor satisfaction has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between community-based homestay service quality and behavioral intention.
- **Navare P.S. and Mali.S.** highlights in their paper, “*Homestays-An Emerging Accomodation preference for travellers in India*” the demand among the tourists for homestay as a means of accommodation. The study was conducted on 60 travellers approached via travel agents in Pune and Mumbai which provided the researcher with the insight that tourist perceives homestay accommodation is an excellent way of experiencing the authentic style of living of a vacation.
- **Biswakarma G.**, in his research titled, “*When small things are impressive*” *Tourist Satisfaction towards Homestay in Nepal*” looks into the perspectives of tourist satisfaction and their impacts on the tourism attributes while availing homestay tourism in Nepal. The study was carried out through a self designed instrument based on a 5 point Likert-type scale. Though 26 manifests variables were developed based on four aspects of homestay tourism destination, Post Exploratory Factor Analysis indicates 22 variables as important with 5 attributes of homestay destination namely: Local lifestyle-costumes, Cultural performance, Reception, Local cuisine & Accommodation, Amenities & Safety . Out of the five factors, hospitality (reception) was found to have greater impact on tourists satisfaction followed by amenities & safety, local cuisine & accommodation, local lifestyle & costumes and Cultural performance.
- **Hu Yi-Chung, Wang Jen-Hung and Wang Ru-Yu (2012)**, in his paper titled “*Evaluating the Performance of Taiwan Homestay Using Analytic Network Process*” has developed and constructed a set of tailor-made evaluation indicators taking into account the previous literatures and expert interviews. For the evaluation alternative, two homestays (Homestay A and Homestay B) were selected and their lodging guests were chosen as the research objects. It was found from the study that surroundings and features of the buildings, service quality and homestay operation and management were considered the key aspects to both homestays and

customer groups. Overall, the study concluded that the performance of both, Homestay A and Homestay B were efficient in meeting the expectations of their respective customer groups.

- **Jamal S.A., Othoman, N. and Muhammad N. (2017)**, in his study titled “*Tourist perceived value in a community-based homestay visit: An investigation into the functional and experiential aspect of value*” analyses the functional and experiential aspects of value as perceived by tourists while experiencing the community-based homestay tourism. Structural equation model was performed on the sample size of 353 observations and the results indicated that along with functional and experiential factors, emotional factors also plays an important determinant of the tourist-perceived value in the context of community-based homestay tourism. It was also found that the value dimensions addressed in the study will facilitate the host providers and marketers in improving the value perceptions of tourists and develop better positioning strategies.
- **Jamaludin M., Othman N and Awang Rahmin Abdul** in his research entitled “*Community Based Homestay Programme: A Personal Experience*” represents a case study of the performance of two homestay community namely;Kg.Laklok Machang and Kg.Suri.Observation, interviews and participation were carried out informally between the guests and the hosts to achieve the objectives of the study. The findings were derived taking into account three perspectives of homestay programme namely; activities performed interaction between hosts and guests and lastly the facilities so provided. It was found that both the homestay programme had well organised activities which includes traditional games, cooking and performances, whereas in terms of facilities both the homestay community needed improvement. However, regarding interaction between hosts and guests, it seemed to be more natural interaction in Kg.Laklok compared to planned interaction in Kg.Suri.
- With the purpose of studying the satisfaction level of tourists towards homestay business in Lawas Sarawak, **Matthew, G. (2016)** conducted a quantitative research using questionnaire based survey in his paper titled “*A Study on Tourist Satisfaction towards Homestay Services in Lawas Sarawak*”. The findings of the research indicated that homestay services were more experience based to the tourist and provided them positive satisfaction as they could enjoy their local way of living and make new friends during their stay.
- Throughout the course of any tour, the tourists experiences invariable thoughts and feelings. Such experiences were explored by **Aziz, N.I.A., Fatimah, H. et.al (2014)** in his paper, “*Exploring Tourists Experiences in Kampung Beng Homestay Programme*” using Schmitt’s(1999)experiential modules to elucidate attractions in Kampung Beng in the state of Perak, Malaysia. Based on the survey analysis, respondents supported the potential of Kampung Beng homestay programme as an attractive experience as it provides unique products and services right from the arrival of guests. All of these experiences have created a positive mind set on the tourists, thereby encouraging further consumption of the destination.
- **Rasoolimanesh, S.M. et. al. (2016)** in his paper “*Tourists’ Perceived Value and Satisfaction in a Community-Based Homestay in the Lenggong Valley World Heritage Site*” attempts to analyse the tourists’ perceived value while experiencing community-based homestay. Perceived value was assessed by multi- dimensional scale comprising functional, emotional and social-value dimensions. The findings show a strong positive effect for perceived value on the satisfaction of homestay guests. In addition, this study makes an important theoretical and methodological contribution to both-homestay and perceived value literature by assessing perceived value as an integrated formative construct and by examining the overall perceived value of homestay guests on their satisfaction.
- With a view to examine the relationships among perceived value, satisfaction level and destination loyalty of tourists availing Community based tourism in Korea, **Kim, K.H. and Park (2017)** conducted a study on 254 visitors of 6 CBE villages in his paper titled “*Relationships among Perceived Value, Satisfaction, and Loyalty: Community-Based*

Ecotourism in Korea” Through the structural equation model so conducted, the study indicated positive effects on the functional, social and economic value. Furthermore, it was found that the overall value and tourist satisfaction plays a significant role in destination loyalty.i.e.the more satisfied a tourist is, the more loyal he is to the destination.

IX. MAJOR FINDINGS

➤ *With regard to Objective 1*

- ❖ The concept of Homestay is still in its nascent stage in India as compared to a much more organized and matured stage outside India particularly in the developed countries as also in the neighbouring Asian countries where the primary industry is tourism.

- ❖ In many African locations too, homestay arrangements for tourists are made abundantly available.

- ❖ The organization and functioning of Homestays, in India, have been largely initiated, monitored and governed by NGOs and Government Schemes.

- ❖ In case of outside India, however, many already established players in the tourism and accommodation sector are found to initiate and operate Homestay facilities.

- ❖ Most of the Homestay arrangements, in India, belong to the rural locations and hence, come under the purview of Rural Tourism by default. Urban homestays are yet to gain popularity in the country which is a dire need for tourists who wish to cut down on their high expenses on urban stays.

- ❖ There can be evidenced a similar trend in the rural: urban ratio of homestay arrangements outside India too although there are quite a few urban homestay facilities also coming up in many “expensive” and developed countries for travelers of all categories and requirements.

- ❖ It has been found that most of the Homestay facilities made available by the established travel businesses are targeted at the luxury seeking section of travelers rather than those seeking stay arrangements at an economical rate.

- ❖ In India, some old and historical monuments, mansions and palaces have been reworked upon and recreated in a way as to be converted into Heritage homes for luxury stays.

- ❖ In many popular tourist destinations of India, PPP (Public Private Partnership) models have been developed in and around the prime tourist spot. It has been observed that the tourism players in the prime tourist spot (say Gangtok in Sikkim) have collaborated with the local residents of neighbouring rural areas (like Changlang, Nathula, etc) to make for stay and dine arrangements at the places of visit included in the tourist itinerary.

➤ *With regard to Objective 2*

- ❖ Internal and external challenges like incompetent community participants, lack in experience and knowledge, lack in creativity and skills, reluctance to take risks, exploitation by outside parties, lack of efficient networking are some common hindrances in the functioning of homestays both within and outside the country.

- ❖ The actual process of decision making depends heavily on political networks. As a result, the poorer segments are excluded/left behind from participating in the homestay programme. Thus, though homestay tourism is perceived as a developmental tool, yet it remains vulnerable due to political interference.

- ❖ The operators may gain various benefits in the form of economic, social, cultural as well as environmental conservation while participating in homestay development operations; however, provided that the lion’s share of the income and profits earned by homestay facilities is passed on to the property owners.

- ❖ It plays a significant role in sustainable development and contributes towards economic and social sustainability by treasuring local culture and tradition. All that is required is capacity development, basic infrastructure and well-framed government mechanism

❖ Homestay tourist accommodation was found to be a significant means of boosting the socio-economic wellbeing of rural people but to benefit fully the local people need to be trained with the basic knowledge and skills. Destination marketers and the homestay operators should take into consideration the factors influencing tourist choice of homestay. This is often overlooked owing to the strong undercurrent of fast and big profits.

❖ Studies revealed that the village leaders with a strong vision and collaborative partnerships can create a successful homestay model. The villages would largely benefit from first-aid training and workshops on developing educational demonstrations. However, in practice, such foresight and enterprising spirit is hard to come by amidst village heads and leaders.

❖ It was observed that the hosts lack confidence when it comes to hosting and this causes lack of opportunity for guests to experience the host culture and daily lifestyle.

❖ The findings were also indicative of the need of financial assistance by the Government alongwith the required host-training for an effective sustainable tourism development.

❖ Homestays were found to promote sustainable community development by fostering gender equality in rural Nepal. However, most government, NGO, private initiatives at developing homestays have been found to ignore this dimension of gender based empowerment.

❖ Visitor satisfaction has been found to have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between community-based homestay service quality and behavioral intention.

❖ Tourists perceive homestay accommodation as an excellent way of experiencing the authentic style of living of a vacation.

❖ Amongst the factors most influential in creating a positive homestay experience for tourists, physical infrastructure takes top priority followed by cuisine, emotional connect and activities offered.

❖ The gap between perceived value and delivered value in homestay experience plays a crucial role in determining success and sustainability of homestays.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

So as to mitigate the wide gap between the tourists and the homestay providers, intended at bringing in a win – win stand for both parties, it is required that there is some kind of a direct connect developed between both. While, on the one hand, this will cut down on the intermediate costs associated with intermediaries borne by the tourists; on the other hand, it will ensure that the rightful beneficiaries (i.e. the property owners and grassroot level service providers) of homestay arrangements get their due share of profit without any fear of being exploited by the larger and more established players of the industry. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been forwarded in respect of creating a Consortium for Residency Tourism, which would be a step ahead in Homestay Tourism:

- Such models and designs of “direct connect” may be given life via extensive use of basic technologies like tele bookings aided by a directory of homestay hosts spread over different locations of the nation and/or globe, mobile apps, online social networks and self designed websites and pages on the World Wide Web.

- This would necessitate complimentary and supplementary mention and action in so far as the design and implementation of Government and Semi-Government policies and Schemes are concerned; particularly with regard to the provision for free or low cost training to the prospective and existing local homestay facilitators, and the provision for zero/low interest loans and grants to them against start ups and working capital.

- Moreover, Government support in terms of development and maintenance of road and conveyance infrastructure as also in terms of techno connectivity (as in fast and consistent network connectivity) is also a felt necessity for such businesses to flourish in the long run.

- Also, the guarantee and assurance of safety and security of life and property of both the tourists and the facilitators is to be looked into by the concerned authorities (like local town and village committees, police and vigilance offices, etc) by way of verification of the identity and criminal records (if any) of the parties at stake before and during their entering into any residential agreement.
- Nonprofit organizations, having the requisite core competencies and expertise, may come forward to create the “direct connect” for the greater social good and economic development.
- The tentative model(s) so designed need to incorporate a facet whereby both the operators as well the tourists are given liberties towards their decision as to stay or not to stay, when to host/stay and/or when not to and so on so forth.
- The design(s) in this respect should see to it that such initiatives finally lead to the development of a distinctive community of homestay owners (who themselves are the service providers) and tourists just like the existence of social networking internet communities who enjoy open access to making friends from across the globe.

XI. CONCLUSION

While there has been evidenced some growth in the development and operations of homestays across the country and abroad, there remains much scope for improvement and further growth in this sphere. While considerable degree of employment opportunities and income generation (amidst the locals of a place) have been made possible due to the emergence of homestays in many rural locations, similar initiatives are expected to grow in the urban tourist locations as well. The latter stands justified as urban destinations are generally costlier as compared to rural locations and hence, tends to burn deeper into the pockets of tourists. This fact makes it quite challenging for the budget travelers to explore urban destinations. On the other hand, for the property owners, particularly the naïve rural residents, to be better able to earn out of homestays, mechanisms need to be developed that ensure a direct linkage between facilitators and prospective travelers with some amount of guaranteed security to both parties. These two dimensions taken into consideration, homestays tend to be the promising new face of the future tourism industry.

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